

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The amendment is in response to the Office Action dated December 16, 2003. Claims 1-25 are pending in the present invention. Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, and 10-21. Accordingly, claims 1-25 remain pending.

Amended Claims

Applicants amended independent claims 1, 10, 15 and 17 to clarify the present invention. In particular claims 1, 10, 15 and 17 were amended to recite a system, method, program product and program instructions for purchasing a package, where "the package includes a predefined group of objects," where a catalog database includes "a catalog entry table including the package data correlated to at least one unresolved package, wherein the at least one unresolved package includes one or more products with at least one unresolved attribute," and where the unresolved attribute(s) in the selected unresolved package are resolved "by accessing the package data correlated to the selected unresolved package." Support for these amendments is found in the Specification at page 5, lines 1-8, page 6, lines 7-9; and page 9, line 4 to page 10, line 15 for example. Accordingly, no new matter has been presented.

Claims 2, 11, 16 and 18 were amended to recite that the catalog database further includes "a product attribute table that defines for each product at least one attribute type associated with the product" (Spec., page 6, lines 15-16), and "a product attribute value table that defines at least one value for each attribute type" (Spec., page 7, lines 1-3). Claims 12 and 19 were amended to recite "utilizing the catalog entry table to determine automatically the one or more products in the selected unresolved package." (Spec., page 10, lines 12-15). Claims 13 and 20 were amended to recite "for each of the one or more products in the selected unresolved package, utilizing the

product attribute table to determine automatically the at least one unresolved attribute type.” (Spec., page 11, lines 3-7). Finally, claims 14 and 21 were amended to recite “allowing the customer to select an attribute value from the product attribute value table for the at least one unresolved attribute type.” (Spec., page 11, lines 12-14). Because the amendments are supported by the Specification, no new matter has been presented.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph. The Examiner stated that in claims 1, 10, 15 and 17, the phrase “and/or” rendered the claims indefinite. Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 10, 15 and 17 to delete the phrase “and/or.” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Mikurak (U.S. Patent No. 6,606,744). In so doing, the Examiner stated:

As to claim 1, Mikurak discloses an e-commerce system [e.g., Fig. 4] for enabling the purchase of a package of products and services [e.g., Fig(s). 54-55], comprising:

a) a catalog database [e.g., see the modules 5300, 5324 of Fig. 53; Fig. 80; the Application Database of Fig. 121] comprising package data correlated to at least one package [e.g. see col. 178, lines 19-46].

b) a selection module coupled to the catalog database for allowing a customer to select a package for purchase [e.g. see the shopping Cart processing at col. 96 et seq., Fig. 55].

c) a resolution module coupled to the catalog database for resolving unresolved attributes in the selected package [e.g. see the shopping basket function module at col. 97, lines 9-21].

Applicants respectfully traverse.

The present invention is directed to an e-commerce solution that allows a customer to

purchase a group of merchandise objects, known as a package. The package is predefined by the merchant. By grouping certain objects together to form a package and offering the package for purchase, the merchant can reap promotional and other advantages. For example, the merchant can promote new or low volume products with more popular, high volume products, thereby increasing sales volume overall.

The method and system of the present invention allows the merchant to define, and allows the customer to purchase, an unresolved package that includes one or more products that have at least one unresolved attribute. According to the method and system of the present invention, a database catalog is provided that includes a plurality of cross-referenced tables that enable the customer to resolve unresolved attributes in a selected package. One such table is a catalog entry table (see Figure 2A of the present invention), which includes package data correlated to the unresolved package. The package data in the catalog entry table defines which products make up a package. The catalog entry table (Figure 2A) is cross-referenced against a product attribute table (Figure 2B), which describes which attribute types are associated with a product. The product attribute table, in turn, is cross-referenced against a product attribute value table (Figure 2C), which defines one or more values for each attribute type. Together, these and other tables allow the customer to resolve unresolved attributes of products that make up an unresolved package for purchase.

Accordingly the present invention, as recited in claims 1 and 10, provides:

1. An e-commerce system for enabling the purchase of a package, wherein the package includes a predefined collection of objects, comprising:
 - (a) a catalog database comprising a catalog entry table including package data correlated to at least one unresolved package, wherein the at least one unresolved package includes one or more products with at least one unresolved attribute;
 - (b) a selection module coupled to the catalog database for allowing a customer to select an unresolved package for purchase; and

(c) a resolution module coupled to the catalog database for resolving the at least one unresolved attribute of the one or more products in the selected unresolved package by accessing the package data correlated to the selected unresolved package.

10. An e-commerce method for enabling the purchase of a package, wherein the package includes a predefined collection of objects, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a catalog database comprising a catalog entry table including package data correlated to at least one unresolved package, wherein the at least one unresolved package includes one or more products with at least one unresolved attribute;

(b) allowing a customer to select an unresolved package for purchase; and

(c) resolving the at least one unresolved attribute of the one or more products in the selected unresolved package by accessing the package data correlated to the selected unresolved package.

Independent claims 15 and 17 are program product and computer-readable medium claims having scopes similar to claims 1 and 10, respectively.

The primary reference, Mikurak, is related to a sprawling network system that includes "transfer of information across the internet utilizing telephony routing information and internet protocol address information." (Abstract). In one embodiment, Mikurak provides "a new kind of web architecture framework (called "WAF" in this document) that secures, administers, and audits electronic information use." (Col. 82, lines 8-10). The WAF can be employed to generate a framework "like the one shown in FIG. 53 to support various features such as an electronic commerce component 5300, a content channels component 5302, an administrative component 5304, a customer relationship management component 5306, . . . or a web customer service component 5312." (Col. 82, lines 1-7).

Mikurak is generally related to enabling and supporting commerce related web application services, such as shopping from a virtual catalog (col. 91, line 15 et seq.). In one section, Mikurak describes allowing a customer to buy products and services from a virtual

catalog (col. 91, lines 17-42; Figure 54), and in another section, Mikurak describes a shopping cart function (col. 96, line 20 to col. 98, line 50). In yet another section, Mikurak describes allowing a customer to customize an item for purchase (col. 100, lines 1-42). In each of these descriptions, Mikurak provides *conceptual* ideas, but does not take the next step in teaching or suggesting how one would *implement* such conceptual functions. The present invention takes this step.

Independent Claims 1, 10, 15 and 17

While Mikurak describes conceptually web based commerce, Applicants respectfully submit that Mikurak fails to teach or suggest the implementation described by the cooperation of elements recited in independent claims 1, 10, 15 and 17 of the present invention. In particular, Mikurak fails to teach or suggest “resolving the at least one unresolved attribute in the selected unresolved package by accessing the package data correlated to the selected unresolved package,” where the package data is in “a catalog entry table” in a “catalog database.”

Although Mikurak teaches an application database coupled to a database server in Figure 121, that database stores “application specific data” (col. 178, lines 16-27), and not “a catalog entry table including package data correlated to at least one unresolved package,” as recited in claims 1, 10, 15 and 17. Moreover, although Mikurak discloses the *concept* of allowing the customer to select available features of each of the items to be purchased (col. 100, lines 18-24), it fails to teach or suggest resolving the unresolved attributes of products in a package “by accessing the package data correlated to the selected unresolved package,” as recited in claims 1, 10, 15 and 17.

Because Mikurak fails to teach or suggest the cooperation of elements recited in claims 1, 10, 15 and 17, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 10, 15 and 17 are allowable over

Mikurak. Because claims 2-9, 11-14, 16, and 18-25 depend on claims 1, 10, 15 and 17, the above arguments are applicable, and for the reasons presented above, they too are allowable over Mikurak.

Claims 2, 11, 16 and 18

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 11, 16 and 18 are allowable over Mikurak for additional and alternative reasons. Claims 2 and 11 recite:

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the catalog database further comprises:
 (d) item data correlated to a plurality of items, wherein each item is fully resolved;
 (e) a product attribute table that defines for each product at least one attribute type associated with the product; and
 (f) a product attribute value table that defines at least one value for each attribute type.

11. The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the catalog database further comprises a product attribute table and a product attribute value table, wherein the product attribute table defines for each product at least one attribute type associated with the product, and the product attribute value table defines at least one value for each attribute type.

Claims 16 and 18 are program product and computer-readable medium claims having scopes similar to claims 2 and 11, respectively.

Mikurak fails to teach or suggest “a product attribute table” and “a product attribute value table,” as recited in claims 2, 11, 16 and 18. The Examiner contends that Mikurak “discloses the catalog database comprising item data, product data and attribute data [e.g., see the Item catalog screen processing, col. 97, line 49-59].” Applicants respectfully disagree. The cited portion of Mikurak describes an item catalog screen on which information on items is provided. The consumer places items into the shopping basket and the consumer is able to examine the shopping basket’s contents at any time.

There is no mention or suggestion of “a product attribute table” that “defines for each

product at least one attribute type associated with the product,” and/or “a product attribute value table” that “defines at least one value for each attribute type,” as recited in claims 2, 11, 16 and 18. For this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 11, 16 and 18 are allowable over Mikurak.

Claims 12, 13, 14, 19, 20 and 21

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, and 21 are allowable over Mikurak for additional and alternative reasons. Claims 12, 13, and 14 recite:

12. The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein resolving step (c) comprises utilizing the catalog entry table to determine automatically the one or more products in the selected unresolved package.

13. The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein resolving step (c) further comprises, for each of the one or more products in the selected unresolved package, utilizing the product attribute table to determine automatically the at least one unresolved attribute type.

14. The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein resolving step (c) further comprises allowing the customer to select an attribute value from the product attribute value table for the at least one unresolved attribute type thereby resolving the selected package.

Claims 19, 20 and 21 are computer-readable medium claims having scopes similar to claims 12, 13 and 14, respectively.

Claims 12-14 and 19-21 elaborate on the resolving step/instruction (c) of claim 10 and claim 17, respectively. They disclose how the catalog entry table, the product attribute table and the product attribute value table are used to resolve the at least one resolved attribute in the selected unresolved package.

As stated above, Mikurak is not directed to implementation. Rather it is devoted to conceptual ideas. Accordingly, Mikurak fails to teach or suggest utilizing the various tables described above (e.g., in claims 2, 11, 16 and 18) in the manner recited in claims 12-14 and 19-

21, to resolve unresolved attributes in one or more products in a package. For this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 12-14 and 19-21 are allowable over Mikurak.

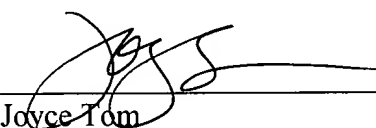
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1-25 are allowable over the cited reference. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the claims as now presented.

Applicant's attorney believes that this application is in condition for allowance. Should any unresolved issues remain, Examiner is invited to call Applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date



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